THE

Witness.

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FOR THE WITNESS.

ON SEARCHING THE SCPIPTURES.....No. IV.

CONNECTED with the conduct of the clergy, and in addition to the causes already mentioned, which have contributed to the neglect of the oracles of God, is the implicit faith which many have in the teachers of religion in the present day. Ministers now are not inspired as the apostles were, nor have they the least claim to infallibility. If any of them should insinuate such things, they ought to be rejected as deceivers and enthusiasts. What any of them have to say, if true, must be derived from the revelation of God long ago completed; and ought to be received by none from them without examination. "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." 1 Thess. v. 21. Isa. viii. 20. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. It is not the whims, dreams, or private interpretations of the word of God by any preacher, we are called to hear; but the truth delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. "My sheep hear my voice,

and I know them, and they follow me: and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." John x. 27, 5. 1 John iv. 6. 2 John 10, 11.

It is matter of deep lamentation, and cause of shame, that many of the professed disciples of Christ, instead of hearing him and his apostles, and receiving implicitly what they have written, transfer the honour and authority due to them to their ministers. The Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error, is not determined by them, by a constant appeal to the inspired writings, but—does our minister think so? Such seem to act in religion as if they had no understanding of their own, or were forbidden on pain of death to exercise it, or had made an entire surrender of it into his hands. On no point in religion can they form any judgment, but as they receive it from him: his ideas they regularly retail, and even his phraseology they generally use. To dissent from his opinions is considered by them as erring from the faith; and from his tribunal they think there is no appeal. Their minister appears to be their oracle, and *his* declarations with them are equivalent to inspiration. Every thing in religion that does not comport with his creed, however plainly taught in the scriptures, is reckoned by them heretical or non-essential. Believing as he believes, and practising as the church does under his direction, they follow the multitude, whether right or wrong. Their faith and their practice may be both scriptural; but if they are, it is only by tradition, for they have never examined them. The faith of such stands in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God. What is truth? is a question they feel little or no interest in. It is not, What saith the scripture? with such; but, What saith our minister? It is not, Is this from heaven, or of men? but, Does Dr. such-a-one believe so? It is not, Is this commanded of God, or is it a tradition of the fathers? but, Is it generally approved by our churches?

If you hear such persons pray, it is either the prayer of the minister they have learned verbatim, having heard it

so often, or the mere gleanings of his phraseology. It is also distressing to hear the remarks of such, both about the word of God and their minister. If they speak of any thing in it, they speak with cold indifference; but if of any thing the minister has said, it is in raptures of enthusiasm. The precious book which they neglect and despise, justly and appositely declares such persons "*followers of men.*" In this apparently pious, but in reality wicked, course of life, they justify themselves by saying, "Our minister is a pious, learned, and worthy man, and he must know better about these things than we. It is his business to explain the Bible: he is well paid for it. Of what use is he, if after all we must search the Bible for ourselves?"—What! will the piety, learning, or worthiness of your minister avail you any thing in the day of the Lord? You may then say, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out;" but the Lord will then say to you, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Prov. i. 24—31. Is the minister to be judged for us, in the great and terrible day of the Lord? If not, why should he judge for us now. Will the minister go to hell for us, if we be condemned at that day for not knowing and believing the truth the Bible contains? If not, let us attend to the scriptures now, for they contain the words of eternal life, and by them we shall be judged in the last day. We might with equal propriety pay the minister for believing the Bible for us, as pay him for searching it for us. Whatever we may do by proxy, we cannot search the scriptures, nor believe the scriptures, by proxy; and we shall find at last, that no man can go to hell by proxy. No; "every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God. For we must *all* appear before the judg-

ment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Rom. xiv. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10.

It is the command of the living God, that we search his word, and try the spirits by it; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. John v. 39. 1 John iv. 1. To act otherwise, is not only resigning the right of private judgment, and implicitly becoming followers of men; but it is daring rebellion against the Lord, and esteeming his precious word as a thing of nought. Your conduct in the affairs of this life, condemns you as it regards that life which is to come. Would you receive money from your minister, in the ordinary transactions of this life, without an examination? Would you think it sufficient implicitly to receive the money? and would it satisfy you to say, "Our minister is a pious, learned, and worthy man, and he must know better about these things than we?"

The popish nostrum, that the clergy, and not the people, are the judges in matters of religion, is now generally rejected in theory; but it is still retained by thousands in practice. What the priests in the Romish church claimed as their exclusive right, is now freely granted to ministers; and what in those days the people were unlawfully denied, the people in these days profanely refuse. It is a pity, that men with Bibles in their hands should act so in the nineteenth century. This conduct is not like persons who regard the authority of God, tremble at his words, and esteem them more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold.

The Bible contains the whole of the religion of Jesus Christ. In every thing that respects his religion, we ought to put the question, What saith the scripture? Any thing for which chapter and verse cannot be produced, ought to be rejected as a human invention. He that cannot do this, ought to be rejected as teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. But it is one thing to have a Bible, and another to understand what it contains. The former we may have for a few shillings, the latter cannot be attained but by reading it, searching it, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and as new-born babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. Attention to the scriptures will deliver us from implicit faith

in every teacher, enable us to detect the errors which are abroad in the world, and constrain us to love those who bring us the doctrine of Christ, for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them. It is true, it will put an end to the senseless, superstitious, and ignorant veneration people have for a man called a minister; but it will teach us to esteem those who teach the doctrines of Christ very highly in love, for their works' sake.

Not only has implicit faith in living teachers contributed to the neglect of the scriptures, but also undue attachment to the writings of men. Implicit faith in living teachers is a sore evil; but it is very greatly increased by superstitious attachment to the writings of the dead. The writings of men live after they are dead, and they, though dead, by them yet speak. While they lived they were esteemed, and many of them justly esteemed for their works' sake. When they wrote books, it was not that they might become a Bible to any one, nor to hinder the searching of it; but to excite men to it, and promote it. If many of these men whose writings are so much revered, were permitted to revisit the world, they would weep over the effects produced by their works. Instead of being used as helps, they are taken as guides; instead of being assistants to our knowledge, they are placed as standards of truth; and instead of being simply consulted as authors, they are considered as oracles. While they lived they were revered, and being dead, their writings are adored. In most families you will find a number of such favourite authors. These are preserved with care, read with pleasure, and quoted with complacency. So devoted are many to them, that they are read much more than the Bible, yea, by some to the entire neglect of it. Conversing with such persons, you will hear them quote with readiness and complacency their favourite authors, but seldom if ever a sentence from the book of God. It is not with them, "as it is written in the scriptures," but as the worthy Mr. —— has said, or as the pious Mr. —— has observed. If they happen to stumble inadvertently on a sentence of Paul, or of any of the apostles and prophets, no such epithets are affixed to their names, nor do they ever mention them with half the apparent complacency as they do the others. It is manifest they are much better acquainted

with men's books than they are with the Bible; and it is undeniable that they much oftener refer to them, and quote them with more affection. To hint to such persons, that some things in these men's writings are unscriptural, is only to excite their indignation: but you might pervert the scriptures in their hearing, and so ignorant are they of them, that they would not know it. In consequence of this undue attachment to men's writings, the oracles of the living God are neglected: for one hour spent in searching the scriptures, six are spent with many in reading books which, when read, they have only learned from them that they were not worth reading. Attempting to find out truth among the crowd of human opinions, such persons are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of *the truth*. If ever correct ideas of what is truth should be generally formed, the faith of the persons stands rather in the opinions of men, than in the authority of "thus saith the Lord."

In addition to the above, the mode of public teaching has, in the writer's apprehension, contributed in no small degree to the neglect of the scriptures. The ministry is considered by many as a trade, and preaching performed rather as a theatrical exhibition, than employed for the edification of the souls of men! The man with a florid style of language, whatever his doctrine may be, is considered the best preacher. A text is read from the Bible, and that perhaps strangely accommodated to suit the sermon, when from beginning to end of it, not a single reference is made to the book of God, either for proof or illustration of the sentiments advanced. The sermon is perhaps elegantly composed, and handsomely *read*, but the doctrine is Socinianism, Arminianism, or heathenish morality modernized. If the mere mention of Jesus Christ's name, or his atonement, would save the whole congregation from eternal perdition, they are not to be found in the composition: and, as if a quotation from the Bible would spoil its appearance, and disgrace the preacher, it seems carefully avoided. If such preachers were well acquainted with the scriptures, it seems almost impossible but that without any intention they would introduce more of them into their sermons. What was said concerning the priests in the days of Wickliff, is not altogether inapplicable at the present day. A certain

writer says, "Dr. Wickliff complained of the clergy of his time, that they *left the holy scriptures, to study heathen men's laws, and worldly covetous priests' traditions*, or the civil and canon law. The same Æneas Sylvius, afterward pope Pius II. (A. D. 1458,) observed of the Italian priests, that it did not appear that they had even so much as read the New Testament. Robert Stephens tells us of the Sorbonists, that being asked by him in what place of the New Testament such a thing was written, they answered, that they had read in *urim* or in the *decrees*, but what the New Testament was they did not know."

"Faith cometh by hearing;" but it should be ever remembered, that it is by hearing *the word of God*. If the people are amused at meeting with philosophy, they may become philosophers; or, if they are entertained with a mere moral essay, they may become moralists: but, unless the doctrine of Jesus Christ is taught, it cannot be expected that they will be Christians. But "how oft, when Paul has served us with a text, has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preached!" In the opinion of some, the entertainment of the stage does less real injury to the souls of men than this kind of preaching. With attendance on the former, men never connect the salvation of their souls; with attendance on the latter, it is constantly associated. Repentance for attending the first, is generally considered necessary; but for attending the last, men think themselves entitled to commendation. While many allow the theatre to be a profane vestibule to the chambers of death, few will admit, that such meeting-houses are only consecrated antichambers to the same place.

It is matter of regret, that even many teachers of religion, whose sentiments are considered orthodox, make so little use of the scriptures in their sermons. Such ought surely not only to be mighty in the scriptures, but also skilful in the word of righteousness. But, instead of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and using great plainness of speech, the word of the Lord is little used, and the sermon for the most part a piece of abstruse metaphysical reasoning. The Bible being thus neglected by the minister, except for his text, the hearers see no need to bring Bibles with them to meeting. Accordingly, it is a very rare thing to see a Bible in any place of worship, except one

in the pulpit, and even it seems kept there more for ornament than for use. From public disuse to private neglect, the transition is easy, and unless prevented by the Lord, seems unavoidable. Too many facts, it is to be feared, might be produced, shewing that the scriptures are neglected in private; and if the causes of this neglect are inquired after, it will be found that those mentioned above are of the number.

From the above remarks some may be ready to say, would you have us to despise ministers, and cease from reading any books but the Bible? So far from leading you to despise the former, the remarks are intended to lead you to esteem those who truly are the ministers of Jesus Christ from proper principles, and to distinguish those who are so from all others: and so far from the above remarks putting an end to the reading of books, by exciting you to the study of the Bible, it would produce quite the contrary effect. Making *it* our study, we would avail ourselves of every book that could throw light on any part of it, whoever the persons were who wrote them. Instead of being satisfied with a few select authors, our desire of books would be insatiable. But we should then use books for a different purpose, and in a different manner. Instead of bringing them into the family to turn the Bible out of doors, we should make them all servants to it as master, and keep them in constant subjection. When the priests of the Romish church had taken the Bible out of the hands of the common people, reading books, and learning of every kind, soon ceased to be sought after. The Reformation was produced by an appeal to the word of God. At that period, reading and learning again began to be attended to. This fact stands as an incontestable proof, that attention to the scriptures is the best way to increase true science in the world. To neglect it, is to pave the way for becoming the creatures of kings, the tools of priests, the dupes of ignorance, and in the end, unlettered heathens.

CYPRIAN.

(To be continued.)

NO MORALITY WITHOUT TRUE RELIGION.

It is common for professed infidels, and other enemies to true religion, to cry up morality as something opposed to it; and hence, it may be, some have thought proper to cry it down: yea, many, who by their practice have proved themselves friendly to a holy life, have yet, on this account, it should seem, found it necessary so to distinguish between morality and religion, as to represent the former as something very inferior in its nature to the latter. But it ought to be considered, that the morality on which the enemies of true religion love to dwell is of a *spurious kind*: it does not consist in the love of God in his true character, or of men in such a way as to rejoice in what contributes to their greatest good. It is a morality essentially defective; it leaves God and religion out of the question, and is confined to what are called the *social virtues*, or things which every man in his dealings with men finds it his interest to promote. When we hear such characters cry up morality, instead of coldly admitting it to be a very good thing in its place, and insisting that religion is something of an entirely different nature; we ought cordially to allow the importance of genuine morality, and insist upon it, that if this were attended to, true religion could not be neglected. Such characters would then discover their dislike to our morality, as much as they now do to what is called religion. Such a statement of matters, though it might grate on their inclinations, must however approve itself to their *consciences*. Every man feels himself obliged to act upon the principles of morality. Let us then drive home that point in which we have their consciences on our side: let us say with the poet,

> "Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding love,
> "The grand morality is love of Thee!"

While you speak of religion as something entirely distinct from morality, such a character will rest contented in the neglect of the one, and think himself happy, inasmuch as you allow him to be possessed of the other: but could you prove to him that morality, if genuine, would comprise the love of God, of Christ, of the gospel, and of the whole of true religion, it would plant a thorn in his bosom which he would find it difficult to extract. *A. Fuller.*

FOR THE WITNESS.

TO PHILOLOGUS.

ON THE FORM AND ORDER OF A GOSPEL CHURCH.

My dear brother,

THE subject which you proposed to me in the close of your letter, is most interesting to my heart: yet I trembled much at the thought of engaging in the discussion. Not on the account of any want of materials, but partly because *so much* may be said, and has, through the corruption of Christianity, become necessary to be said; and principally, because I am inadequate to the task of convincing the house of Israel 'of their iniquities,' and of persuading them to 'measure the pattern.'

The prophet Ezekiel, in the forty-third chapter, from which you have given me this theme, was shewn in a figure, by Jesus Christ himself, the pattern of his spiritual house. At the seventh verse he declares, "The place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile." But they had nevertheless defiled the sanctuary of their God, by setting their threshold by his thresholds, and their posts by his posts; and so it is at this day. Jesus, the man who appeared to Ezekiel, declared to him that "this is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy." And in the preceding chapter the church in all ages has a solemn admonition in the following words; "O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, that ye have brought strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary to pollute it." These passages, and numberless others both in the Old and New Testaments, shew the character of the true church. It is said of her in Deut. xv. 6. "Thou shalt lend unto many nations, and shalt not borrow." Alas, how has she borrowed from the customs and traditions of the nations, among whom she is scattered as a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains! how has she brought strangers into the sanctuary to pollute it!

But I well know we may easily point out errors and corruptions in all the churches of *every* denomination; but to

exhibit the truth so as to lead men to *examine* for themselves and to *embrace* it, is more important. And surely his fidelity must be suspected, who manifests a willingness to walk contrary to any one command of his divine Master, where it is or where it may be known. And yet there are too many who appear to be warmly attached to religion in general, who are strangely inattentive, some more and some less, to the lesser points (as they call them,) but which are, nevertheless, indispensable to the complete order of a church of Jesus Christ. Indeed it is not uncommon to hear men excuse themselves for doubtful practices, or palpable omissions, by the mere silence of scripture, or by referring to the habits and opinions of others, in whose beaten track they are resolved to walk, though without any higher than mere human authority. To such it seems to afford relief, when pressed on the subject, that 'no church is perfect!' Did these persons rightly understand and fully appreciate the command of Jesus, "Be *ye* perfect," they would feel more unhappy at the disposition which so generally prevails, to resist a reformation in matters which they now profess to esteem trifles. Yes, no faithful obedient disciple of Christ will be afraid of looking into himself and others by the light of divine truth, nor of retracting an error in faith and practice, whether little or great, the moment he may be convinced. You and I, my brother, have frequently heard the necessity of *self*-examination urged in a strange connexion; that is, to divert the attention of the saints from detecting the errors still existing in the churches. And we have too often witnessed the misapplication of these sacred texts, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."—"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" &c. Indeed I was acquainted with a church, the pastor of which was an able man, who had been educated in the traditions of the fathers, and learned too much of his divinity in the schools. When some of the more discerning members detected a palpable error in their practice, he undertook to defend it merely upon the ground of antiquity, and excited a popular indignation against these *innovators*, by a sermon from these words, "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions." Now nothing in the world could be more clear to any unprejudiced man, who was not blinded by tradition, than this, that if he had

taken the *whole* passage from which he selected his text, half the zeal and ingenuity he displayed would have been sufficient to prove, that he and his adherents were the men who caused divisions, by walking contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and that these brethren, who were abused and silenced, were right so far as they went, but essentially wrong in not persevering until they had effected a reformation, and entered into the promised possession made to such by the God of peace, to bruise Satan under their feet shortly.

But I was to attempt a description of the true or perfect church. In this undertaking, I am fully apprized of the necessity of being well guarded, lest I be misunderstood, or subject myself to misrepresentation. If I should be so happy as to enjoy the divine unction, which teacheth all things, and be enabled to speak the mind of Christ, I need not be careful to answer, or anticipate objections which may be made by carnal men, or prejudiced professors: no, were I sure of the combined opposition of both; and, what to me would be infinitely more grievous, a loss in any degree of the esteem of real saints, many of whom are too much settled on their lees, I would contend for every *iota* of the truth, so far as I understand it, just as it was committed to the church by Jesus and his apostles.

For the description of the church, I refer you to Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, first chapter, second verse, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." And John in the first chapter of his gospel, describes the same character in the following impressive words; "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." From these passages alone, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that the true church of Christ consists *only* of believers. But these are not the only passages. John the Baptist, in the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, with one master-stroke levels the fabric of a national church, and forever precludes all individual pretensions to the privileges of the kingdom of Christ, without actual holiness and personal obedience; see Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10. But how are men constituted saints? Some tell

us that it is to be born of professing parents, to be publickly initiated into the visible church in infancy, and to be taught certain doctrines as we are capable of receiving them! If this is not an antichrist, my brother, I know not what to call it. But to return: the scriptures represent the new creation of the soul, or its translation from darkness to light, by the mighty power of God in raising his Son from the dead, and by making the light to shine out of chaotic darkness by his own almighty fiat. One short sentence expressed by our blessed Lord, namely, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," establishes three things;—1. That the covenant of grace, so called, included a certain number given to the Redeemer as the purchased inheritance.—2. That not one of that number shall fail of grace here, or of glory hereafter.—3. That notwithstanding the election of grace, *no one* possessing a disposition to come to Jesus by faith in his atonement, will or can be excluded his mercy. Glorious plan! who can find fault? None but those who are indisposed and *will not* come to God for life. Surely all must be convinced, that *they* cannot be Christ's who despise his mercy and reject his revealed grace because it is sovereign and distinguishing.

Thus it appears, that notwithstanding the numerous opinions which have prevailed respecting the church of God, and the variety of opposite characters which have, by ignorant or designing men, been drawn together into separate bodies, and called churches, there is not, nor has there been, nor ever will be to the end of time, but one character, namely, those who are called to be saints, and sanctified in Christ Jesus, united together in gospel order, who sustain the name, in a scripture sense, of the church of Christ. If it were otherwise, and one unregenerate person, either old or young, might with propriety belong to a church, by the same rule, ten or an hundred might, or even every individual. Would this body look like the body of Christ? Except a man have the Spirit of Christ he is none of his. Now it is evident that the tabernacle which Moses made in the wilderness was a type of the gospel church. To this Paul testifies, Heb. viii. 4, 5. where he calls it a shadow of heavenly things. The plan of this building, in all its parts, was sketched by the finger of Jehovah; and

the offering of no man was accepted, unless it was made *willingly with his heart.* With the offerings made by this class of people, the Lord said, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." This very passage is quoted by Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 16. where he vehemently urges the necessity of the saints separating themselves from ungodly professors; and adduces this ancient promise as a motive to unmixed communion. It is worthy of particular remark, that after describing the several parts of the tabernacle very minutely, God commands Moses to make them all of pure gold, even the tongs and the snuff-dishes, shewing apparently, that the meanest saint is equal in value, as it respects his new birth and eternal inheritance, with the most honoured member. And three several times did the Lord charge Moses to make all things pertaining to that typical building, according to the pattern shewed him in the mount. Hence it appears, that Moses and Christ and all the faithful witnesses for truth, perfectly harmonize in this one fact, namely, that the true church of Christ consists exclusively of men and women selected and called out of the world by the doctrine of the gospel, to worship the true God in Christ according to his word.

In regard to the collection of these people together into convenient congregations for the observance of the ordinances of God's house; as the nation of the Jews were selected from all the nations of the earth to bear his name, so in this latter day, according to the promise, Jer. iii. 14. the saints are taken one of a city and two of a family, and brought to Zion, i. e. into a church state; and Jesus their divine master gives them pastors after his own heart, who are by his word and Spirit qualified to feed them with knowledge and understanding. It appears to me, from the account we have of the ordinary pastors, elders or bishops, (which all mean the same thing) that they were generally, if not always, selected from the brethren with whom they first united, having with them been brought to an acquaintance with the truth. This opinion accords with the genius of the gospel dispensation, which no where recognizes a distinct order of men in or over the churches, since the days of the apostles.

By the Jews it was considered a distinguished privilege and honour, that their nobles were of themselves, and their

governors proceeded from among them, Jer. xxx. 21. And this promise was undoubtedly made to that people with special reference to the privileges of the gospel church. It agrees also with the best customs in civil society. Towns select their own citizens to manage their concerns; and societies in general, of every kind, appoint their best members to instruct and to govern the body. I confess that it looks suspicious, when a church, considerable for numbers and standing, cannot proceed in the worship and ordinances of God's house without application to individuals of other churches. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." We may gratefully exclaim with the poet,

> "My gracious God, how plain
> "Are thy directions given!"

Jesus has assured us of his presence without reserve, saying, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." From this passage, in its connexion, it appears, that where a sufficient number of disciples unite together in a church capacity in the name of Christ, for his worship and their own edification, and take his word simply for their rule, his presence is pledged to them, being the only proper stimulus for their visible union; and will always abide with them, (provided they walk in his commands) until they are thoroughly instructed by his word and Spirit; and, as Paul testifies of the Roman brethren, are able also to instruct one another.

Now, my brother, I shall give you my thoughts freely upon the organization and ordinances which are peculiar to this chosen band: not indeed chosen of men, but despised, as all the saints most certainly are, and always will be, while one unregenerate soul remains on earth. And here permit me to say, however the doctrine may be denied in this *refined* age, that it is solely because professors do not act up to the true character of *Christians*, that the very name, and all who deservedly bear it, are not as much despised as ever.

Perhaps I cannot describe the origin of a gospel church better, than by relating a celebrated practical instance which happened in the year 1616. The first congregational church in Great-Britain, was gathered in the following man-

ner :—Several individual Christians, who had fidelity and spirit to renounce the errors of the then reformed churches, resolved to unite in fellowship for the enjoyment of the ordinances, according to their own views of the word of God. Having observed a day of prayer and fasting, each of them made an open confession of faith in Christ, and, joining hands, solemnly covenanted with each other in the presence of Almighty God, to walk together in all his ways and ordinances, as he had already revealed his will, or should further make it known to them. A Mr. Jacob was then chosen pastor, by the suffrage of the brotherhood, and others were appointed to the office of deacons, and all were solemnly set apart to their several offices, with fasting and prayer. They rejected the use of human creeds, taking the scriptures as the sole standard of faith and practice. They nor the churches of the same denomination for many years after, attributed any virtue whatever to the rite of ordination, on which other churches laid so much stress. According to them, the qualifications which constitute a regular minister of the New Testament are, a firm belief in the gospel, a principle of sincere and unaffected piety, a competent stock of knowledge, a capacity of leading devotion and communicating instruction, a serious inclination to engage in the important employment of promoting the everlasting salvation of mankind, and ordinarily an invitation to the pastoral office. Where these things concur, they considered a person as fitted and authorized for the discharge of every duty which belongs to the ministerial function ; and they believed that the imposition of hands of bishops and presbyters, would convey to him no power or prerogatives of which he was not before possessed. And even at this day, as one of their ablest writers informs us, they do not suppose that the essence of ordination lies in the act of the ministers, but in the choice and call of the people, and the candidate's acceptance of that call ; so that their ordination may be considered only as a public declaration of that agreement. But these are the sentiments held by European Independents. There they are a minor denomination, subject to oppression from the national church. Here they are the dominant party, and order things better for themselves. The *clergy* among us, as among the Papists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, hold the keys.

They set up, and *they* pull down. No church must be gathered and constituted, as they call it, but by them. No man must even preach or teach but by their authority, either mediately or immediately. And no one can be ordained without their official aid. Does this look like the conduct of their pious founders, which has been related above, and whom they so much pretend to applaud? Surely not. You hear nothing from them of a *succession* of ordained ministers, authorized by one another to administer sealing ornances. I make these remarks, not because they are necessarily connected with the subject, but to detect the fallacy of the pretensions which the American clergy make to ministerial succession and prerogative. In fact, if the laity could not or did not read for themselves, they must believe that these modern apostles are descended in a regular line, like the house of Aaron or the tribe of Levi, from their predecessors the apostles of Jesus Christ! But who approbated, called and ordained Mr. Jacob, and other eminent servants of God? Surely we the people must suspect the authority of our present clergy, after finding that their origin is of mere modern date. Let us no more listen to pretensions, or yield to practices bottomed on no higher authority than the ipse dixit of an order of men, whose origin is so simple.

Let us go further back. The Roman succession is of far more ancient date. Paul and John both tell us, that antichrist existed in their day. Ordination, infant baptism, &c. must certainly be valid there. Not a link of their chain has been broken. Or, let us be as honest as the Episcopalians, who readily acknowledge *papistical* ordination; but, as it respects the validity of succession, utterly reject that of all dissenters. This is more consistent than our conduct. Our *councils* are the same to us as popes and bishops to them, only they have the advantage of antiquity, and we the honour of inventing and substituting an artful expedient. Now I do believe, my brother, that the intelligence and good sense of men in the present enlightened age, are a guarantee, under Providence, that these absurdities are of short duration. Will men deny that a number of families, or of individuals, have a right to assemble and unite for the worship of God, and to elect and ordain brethren to all the offices required for that purpose, as was

the case with the first independent church established in England? If this mode was correct then, it is so now; and the church of God have not only the right by scripture to exercise this prerogative, but are bound to do it to the end of time, without the interference of sister churches and councils.

In regard to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, they are the precious privileges of all those who believe in Jesus, and of those only, according to the simple language of scripture; for *whatsoever* is not of faith is sin. If Christ have any *lambs* in his flock, which will be found among the goats on his left hand in the day of judgment, or if he, by his special command, have *fig-trees* planted in his garden, which never did or never will bear good fruit, let those mistaken ministers who assert such things, take them as their crowns in the day of the Lord; but O, my brother, let it not be found in that day, that I have propagated such a falsehood, or refrained from exposing such an error. By an examination of the New Testament, it can no where be found that Jesus or his apostles ever admitted a single soul to gospel ordinances, who did not previously profess faith in his name; nor do they any where give the least countenance to such hypocrisy and profanation. It ought not to have become necessary to oppose the rights of unregenerate men to Christ's ordinances; but a false education has led the people from the truth, and they are unconsciously turned to fables. To prove from simple facts and unequivocal declarations of scripture, that the people of God are a peculiar people, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, is, to every unprejudiced man, sufficient to ascertain who have and who have not a right to the ordinances of the gospel church. Hence I have ever thought, that much time has been lost in proving that infants and unregenerate adults have no right to baptism and the Lord's supper. Our Lord declares, that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. How can a person be *in* a kingdom, and a subject of a kingdom, and not even *see* it? Let a man but believe in Jesus; in other words, let him be Christ's, and then he may be assured that he is Abraham's seed, and heir according to the promise. But if he be not Christ's by regeneration and by adoption, he is not Abraham's seed, but a child of

wrath, however he may flatter himself, or be flattered by others, with the notion of being born in the covenant of grace with his believing parents, or entitled to special privileges on account of Abraham or any other man. Surely if the covenant made with that patriarch, was *the* covenant of grace, (which I am not disposed to deny) and all children born of Christian parents are *in* that covenant, it follows of necessity, that they will be *saved* by virtue of the covenant, or they might as well be born out of it as to any service it will be to them, more than to the children of unbelievers; for it seems after all to be conceded, that *neither* will be saved without faith, and that is the free gift of God; and we certainly have as many instances of its being bestowed upon unbaptized and uncircumcised heathen, as upon those, who, it is vainly pretended, are born in covenant. In fine, if Paul had a correct idea of grace, we must conclude, that to be in the covenant of grace, is to be in Christ; and we know that such happy persons are safe for eternity; for they are purchased with his blood, and can never come into condemnation; otherwise grace is no more grace, and the covenant, after all, is no more than a dispensation of works. Blessed be God, these absurdities are not chargeable to his word, but to the ignorance and wickedness of men.

But, having extended this letter beyond my usual limits, I must reserve the remainder of this interesting subject for a future paper. QUARTUS.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN BOSTON IN 1740.

[Concluded from No. V. p. 209.]

ON Monday, March 2, 1740–1, Mr. Tennent preached his farewell sermon to the people of Boston, from Acts xi. 23. to an auditory extremely crowded, and very much affected, in Dr. Colman's house of worship. It was an affectionate parting; and as great numbers of all conditions and ages appeared awakened by him, there seemed to be a general sadness at his going away. Though it was natural for them to resort abundantly to him by whom it pleased the sovereign God chiefly to awaken them, for advice

in their soul concerns; yet while he was here, many repaired to their ministers also, and many more and oftener when he was gone. Mr. Tennent's ministry, with the various cases of those resorting to us, excited us to treat more largely of the workings of the Spirit of grace, as a Spirit of conviction and conversion, consolation and edification in the souls of men, agreeable to the holy scriptures, and the common experiences of true believers.

And now was such a time as we never knew. The Rev. Mr. Cooper was wont to say, that more came to him in one week in deep concern about their souls, than in the whole twenty-four years of his preceding ministry. I can also say the same as to the numbers who repaired to me. By Mr. Cooper's letter to his friend in Scotland, it appears, he has had about six hundred different persons in three months time: and Mr. Webb informs me, he has had in the same space above a thousand. Agreeable to the numerous bills of the awakened put up in public, sometimes rising to the number of sixty at once, there repaired to us both boys and girls, young men and women, Indians and negroes, heads of families, aged persons; those who had been in full communion and going on in a course of religion many years. And their cases represented were, a blind mind, a vile and hard heart, and some under a deep sense thereof; some under great temptations; some in great concern for their souls; some in great distress of mind for fear of being unconverted; others lest they had been all along building on a righteousness of their own, and were still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Some under slight, others under strong convictions of their sins and sinfulness, guilt and condemnation, the wrath and curse of God upon them, their impotence and misery; some for a long time, even for several months, under these convictions: some fearing lest the Holy Spirit should withdraw; others having quenched his operations, were in great distress lest he should leave them forever: persons far advanced in years afraid of being left behind, while others were hastening to the great Redeemer. Nor were the same persons satisfied with coming once or twice, as formerly, but again and again, I know not how often, complaining of their evil and cursed hearts; of their past and present unbelief, pride, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, contempt of Christ and God, and

alienation from them, their love and captivity to sin, and utter impotence to help themselves, or even to believe on Christ, &c. renouncing every degree of worthiness in, and utterly condemning themselves; greatly afraid of deceiving their own souls; and earnestly desirous of being searched, discovered and shown the true way of salvation. Both people and ministers seemed under a divine influence to quicken each other. The people seemed to have a renewed taste for those old pious and experimental writers, Mr. Hooker, Shepard, Gurnal, William Guthrie, Joseph Allein, Isaac Ambrose, Dr. Owen, and others; as well as latter—such as Mr. Mead, Flavel, Shaw, Willard, Stoddard, Drs. Increase and Cotton Mather, Mr. Mather of Windsor, Mr. Boston, &c. The evangelical writings of these deceased authors, as well as of others alive, both in England, Scotland and New-England, were now read with singular pleasure; some of them reprinted and in great numbers quickly bought and studied. And the more experimental our preaching was, like their's, the more it was relished. The people seemed to love to hear us more than ever; the weekly Tuesday evening lectures at the church in Brattle-Street were much crowded and not sufficient. April 17, 1741, another lecture was therefore opened every Friday evening at the South Church; when a seasonable discourse was given by the Rev. Dr. Sewall, from John xvi. 8. And soon after, another lecture every Tuesday and Friday evening was opened at the New-North; three of the most capacious houses of public worship in town; the least of which I suppose will hold three thousand people. Besides the ancient lecture every Thursday noon at the Old Church; and other lectures in other churches.

Nor were the people satisfied with all these lectures; but as private societies for religious exercises, both of younger and elder persons, both of males and females by themselves, in several parts of the town, now increased to a much greater number than ever, viz. to near the number of thirty, meeting on Lord's day, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings; so the people were constantly employing the ministers to pray and preach at those societies, as also at many private houses where no formed society met: and such numbers flocked to hear us as greatly crowded them, as well as more than usually filled

our houses of public worship, both on Lord's days and lectures, especially evening lectures, for about a twelve-month after. Some of our ministers, to oblige the people, have sometimes preached in public and private, at one house or another, even every evening, except after Saturday, for a week together: and the more we prayed and preached, the more enlarged were our hearts, and the more delightful the employment. And O how many, how serious and attentive were our hearers! how many awakened and hopefully converted by their ministers! and how many of such added soon to our churches, as we hope will be saved eternally! Scarce a sermon seemed to be preached without some good impressions.

FOR THE WITNESS.

ON SYMBOLICAL LANGUAGE.....No. V.

We have hitherto chiefly confined our remarks on this subject, to symbolical language in general, without explaining the meaning of symbols, and pointing out their particular application as used in the sacred volume. As this is the language in which the future state of the church of Christ in this world is described, it is surely of great importance, and we hope it will be interesting to our readers to attend to a scriptural and rational interpretation of the particular symbols used by the Holy Spirit.

If we would understand what he means to convey, in order to this, it is absolutely necessary to understand that language in which he writes. As the writings of God are given us to be understood, we may be sure that these writings contain an explanation of his meaning so far as he intends it should be understood, relative to events which have not yet received their accomplishment. We may misunderstand his meaning, and from ignorance, prejudice or other causes, may even pervert it; but I think we may safely adopt the principle, "that the Bible contains the best explanation of itself." Nothing cuts a diamond like a diamond. It becomes us with humility of mind to proceed in our search; and, looking up to the Father of Lights,

pray, "Lord open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

As all symbols must be derived from something in one or other of the two grand divisions made by God at the first creation, viz. "the heavens and the earth" we shall begin with these in our explanation of particular symbols. But as our observations on these would exceed the limits alloted for this department of the Witness, and having a desire to present them at one view to the reader's mind, they must be referred to the next number.

SHAPHAN.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE WITNESS.

THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

[Concluded from No. V. p. 217.]

ONE cause of mistake in regard to prayer, is the *manner* in which it is performed in public. Indeed there are now many kinds of public prayers without precedent in the scriptures; such for instance as municipal, judicial, military and political prayers, &c. all of which are inventions of men, and may be as well performed by one man as another, as to the nature of the exercise. But should the ministers of Jesus leave their appropriate labours and serve political bodies? Is it consonant to their profession to distinguish themselves with a military badge, and, at the head of a regiment, wait the call of the drum to prayers? And does it comport with the *simplicity* of their characters, to make a pompous appearance with masonic insignia, to bow the knee at the master's call, and invoke the "Grand Master in the lodge celestial?" 'Tis too much. My soul, come not thou into their secrets. The ministers of Christ are indeed to preach the gospel to every creature, in order, if possible, to induce them to believe and obey it; and to warn them of certain ruin in consequence of their rejection of him. They are commanded also to *pray* for all men; as well for those in authority, as for others; but no where are they commanded to render *official* services to any body of men, except to the church of God. Yet we find min-

isters of the gospel submitting to Legislative ordination, to military ordination, to masonic ordination, &c.! Every one who is acquainted with this order of *ecclesiastics* in those countries where religion is established by law, and who have known obscene lads and profane men appointed, or in other words ordained, to the office of performing *divine service* on board of ships and in other secular departments, must wonder, greatly wonder that the ministers of Jesus should ever lend their aid and influence, to keep up this farce of mock religion, to the great disparagement of genuine Christianity. In what estimation will prayer, which, in its true import is drawing near to God, not with mere lip service, which his soul abhors, but in spirit and in truth;—in what light will that mysterious communication be viewed by ungodly men, when even the *teachers* of his religion thus prostitute it? Alas, that men should temporise for worldly advantage! Let such make up their account to meet their Judge, with this awful interrogation, "Who hath required this at your hand?" But thirst for popularity or a fear of being singular, has subverted thousands of honest minds. Too weak to resist, too irresolute to reprove, many have fallen into compliances hurtful to their own souls, and dishonorary to the cause which they really love. But while the same principle of cowardice operates to dissuade numbers of the saints from offering their opinion, lest they should give offence, let it be my lot, at every hazard, to testify to my dying day against all such incongruities.

One species of public praying, however, I must not omit to mention in terms of just abhorrence; that is, prayers, as they are called, at political festivals. There you will see a sight at which angels would weep, if angels had the capacity of weeping. I mean a minister of the gospel placed in the desk with a deist, or an atheist, or perhaps with a fratricide, professedly lending him the divine sanction to denounce his fellow mortals, and to profane the divine oracles by his irreverent applications. Is it possible to find advocates for this practice among the followers of the Lamb? I should hope not. Let the servants of Christ then desist from these monstrous associations.

But I intended to make some remarks on the common manner of praying in our *religious assemblies*. Here there is too much formality; and worldly considerations are per-

mitted to hold an undue influence. Surely the spiritual worship of God's house, that is, the church of Christ, in which alone all true worshippers are found, does not require prayers of the length or quality which we sometimes hear. The prayers recorded in scripture for our instruction, afford us no example for occupying a great portion of the precious time appropriated to the dispensation of the word and ordinances, to compliment the Deity, as if we expected some reward for expressing our good opinion of him; or to drag through the minutiæ of a general form, which is anticipated by the hearers almost in every sentence. Prolixity and formality generally go together; and instead of exciting reverence for the name and worship of God, are naturally attended with indifference, fatigue and disgust. Even the most humble and devout worshipper is too apt to degenerate into formality; and such know too well, that where the spirit and fervour ceases, there true prayer ceases also; yet from habit and education, perhaps, they protract the exercise until all the topics are enumerated; and, by the usual phraseology, they at last relieve the impatience of the auditory, by introducing them regularly through the several stages of life, the seasons of sickness and of death, into the kingdom of God. Now, however good and necessary these things are in their proper places, it is cause of regret that on all occasions, before sermon, after sermon; on breaking bread, or pouring out the wine, the same systematic arrangement, more or less, should appear. I am sure there is nothing of this in any prayer given us in the Bible. There we have the simple subject which occasioned the prayer, and the prayer always perfectly adapted to the subject. NEHEMIAH.

FOR THE WITNESS.

TO APOLLOS.

I ADDRESS these lines to you, brother, because I know you do not make the writings of uninspired men the standard by which you judge between truth and error, but the oracles of God. If what I communicate, therefore, harmonizes with them, I feel confident, it will meet your approbation. It has long been a source of grief to a few of

my friends, who appear to be "saints and faithful brethren in Christ," that there is such a visible union existing among some, who believe and rejoice in "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," and Arminians, Arians and Socinians. You very well know that the prophets, the Son of God, the apostles and the primitive Christians bore a public testimony against those, who appeared to be "blind leaders of the blind;" and shall the saints behold the multitude on their way to eternal death, and not witness before high and low, rich and poor, to the truth as it is in Jesus? Well may infidels sneer at such professors of religion, who unite with the enemies of the gospel in this way: for they say, Here is a man who preaches one doctrine, while perhaps seven-eighths of his church believe another, as different as the sentiments of a Pagan are from those of a Christian;—and in another church he beholds one-eighth part of them who believe in the "doctrine of Christ," while their minister preaches "another gospel, which is not another," and the rest of the church love to have it so. But, says the infidel, if the Bible be true, there is but one gospel, one plan of redemption, and there is a solemn curse twice pronounced, Gal. i. 8, 9, against all who preach another gospel. Of course, if there were a reality in the religion of Christ, I should not discover that union in societies, called churches, when their sentiments are as diverse, in important points, as the climates in the torrid and the frigid zones. He traces this union from churches to ordinations, and from ordinations to associations; but he is confounded—he wonders, and he perishes. And do not some, who proclaim the real gospel, confirm him in his delusion? For they hold up to view the truth as it is in Jesus, and the character of those who preach it; also false doctrine, and those who advocate it; and perhaps warn their hearers against hearing them and embracing their doctrine, as it will land them in black despair. But, be astonished, O ye heavens! and be thou confounded, O earth! at the conduct of such inconsistent messengers of Christ, in their approving of men as the real ministers of Immanuel, who give no evidence of their being "born again," and unite with them in church fellowship, ordinations, and associations.

If Christians do not think alike in every particular, they may separate from false churches, and form themselves into

churches according to the views they may have of truth, that infidels may no longer reproach them for their criminal practice of remaining unequally yoked together with unbelievers, contrary to the plain language of Jehovah; see 2 Cor. vi. 14. and onward. But some will object, and say, they had covenanted with such a church before they experienced religion, and consequently infer that they are under obligations to continue with them. But is not this mode of reasoning unscriptural? For Paul was a zealous professor of religion before his conversion, and no doubt was solemnly engaged to the high priest, of whom he received letters, to bind Christians and carry them to Jerusalem; but after he was born again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," what did he do? Did he go up to Jerusalem, and ask a dismission of the Jewish Rabbies, and to be recommended to the Christians? No. But what saith he on this subject? Gal. i. 15, 16. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, &c. *immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*" What a noble example was Paul, in separating from those who made high pretensions to religion, while they were vital enemies to God, for those to follow who are called with an holy calling, and are connected with Arminian and Socinian churches.

"Covenant breakers!" a dismal sound! How it grates on the ears of the pretended sons of Levi, and all who are substituting the systems of men for the *pure* word of God. Paul, Luther, Calvin, and many godly Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists may be stigmatized as "covenant breakers," and charged with "perjury of the most heinous kind," with equal propriety that some are at this period; and one reason why such epithets are applied to some Christians, is, because persons are unacquainted with the religion of the Bible, with the subjects and order of church of Christ, as described in the word of God. Many are ignorantly led to conclude, that if a number of false teachers, called ministers, and some godly men who preach the gospel, should assemble and perform certain ceremonies, and declare certain men and women to be a church of Christ, when perhaps there are not more than two of them who appear to know the truth as it is in Jesus, that they ought to be considered by the world as a regular gos-

pel church. Or if there is a society that has been long established, and there are one hundred persons members of what they call the church, and five of them rejoice in the liberty of the gospel and appear to love the saints, while the ninety-five with their minister appear to be dead in trespasses and sins, and manifest to the saints that they have no divine relish for the things of Christ, and even speak against some of the most important parts of his doctrine; there are some persons who think that such a body of professors ought to be considered as a gospel church, and that the saints who are connected with them are under the most solemn obligation to continue with them; and should they leave such a church without a dismission, they would be charged, even by some who preach the gospel, with the *awful* guilt of "perjury of the most heinous kind." If the scriptures are the rule by which the saints are to form their opinion of what subjects a gospel church is composed, the above societies cannot be considered as churches of Christ, without denying the testimony of God. For it must be evident to every candid and well-informed saint, that the primitive churches were built of lively stones, that they might appear to be a spiritual house; consequently we are unauthorized to recognize any society, however splendid they may appear in the eyes of the spiritually blind, as a regular gospel church, unless they have the appearance, in some good degree, of those churches which are described in the word of God. It is evident to real Christians who have examined the scriptures, that a church of Christ is not the work of man but of God; that it is he who changes the hearts of sinners, and influences them to love his character as revealed in his word, and to reverence his will so far as it is manifested to them. Such persons are voluntarily inclined to have respect to *all* his commandments and ordinances, and to take the whole armour of God; they consider his word as a perfect system of truth, believing with Paul, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

In my next letter, I shall pursue these important subjects, and hope that you will, my brother, take them into serious consideration.

ARISTARCHUS.

KING JAMES'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TRANSLATORS OF THE BIBLE,

WITH EXTRACTS AND REMARKS.

[The following copy of instructions, with the extracts, are taken from Lewis's History of the English translations of the Bible. They are here inserted, not to introduce the controversy about baptism, but to shew (what is little known) that king James actually forbade the translators of our Bible, to translate the words *baptism* and *baptize*; and that these words, accordingly, are not translated by them. If any of our readers should doubt of the correctness of the extracts made, we refer them to the above work, that they may read for themselves.]

"For the better ordering of the proceedings of the translators, his Majesty recommended the following rules to them to be very carefully observed.

1. The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit.

2. The names of the prophets and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained as near as may be, according as they are vulgarly used.

3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, as the word *church* not to be translated *congregation*, &c.

4. When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which has been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogy of faith.

5. The division of the chapters to be altered, either not at all, or as little as may be, if necessity so require.

6. No marginal notes at all to be affixed but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot without some circumlocution so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.

7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down, as shall serve for the fit references of one scripture to another.

8. Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated or amended them severally by himself where he thinks good, all to meet together, to confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand.

9. As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously: for his majesty is very careful in this point.

10. If any company, upon the review of the book so sent, shall doubt or differ upon any places, to send them word thereof to note the places, and therewithal to send their reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work.

11. When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority to send to any learned in the land for his judgment in such a place.

12. Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of the clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as being skilful in the tongues, have taken pains in that kind, to send their particular observations to the company either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford, according as it was directed before in the king's letter to the archbishop.

13. The directors in each company to be the deans of Westminster and Chester, and the king's professors in Hebrew and Greek in the two universities.

14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible, viz. Tyndal's, Coverdale's, Matthews',* Wilchurch's, Geneva."

"A copy of these orders or instructions being sent to Mr. Lively at Cambridge, and other copies to Dr. Harding the king's reader of Hebrew at Oxford, and Dr. Andrews, dean of Westminster; it seems as if some other doubts arising concerning them, application was made by the vice-chancellor to the bishop of London for the resolution of them. To which his Lordship replied, that, 'to be sure, if he had not signified so much unto them already, it was his majesty's pleasure, that, besides the learned persons employed with them for the Hebrew and Greek, there should be three or four of the most eminent and grave divines of their university assigned by the vice-chancellor, upon confer-

* This seems to intend the great Bible printed 1539 and 40, by Edward Wilchurch, one of king Henry the VIII's printers, and Grafton.

ence with the rest of the heads, to be the overseers of the translations, as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better observation of the rules appointed by his highness, and especially concerning the *third* and *fourth* rule; and that when they had agreed upon the persons for this purpose, he prayed them to send him word thereof."

The author from which the above is extracted, observes, that the translators in their preface to the reader affixed to their translation, declare as follows; "they had," they said, "on the one side avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who left the old ecclesiastical words and betook them to others, as when they put *washing* for *baptism*, and *congregation* for *church*: and on the other hand, had shunned the obscurity of the Papists in their *Azymes, Tunike, Rational, Holocausts, Prepuce, Pasche*, and a number of such like, whereof their late translation (at Doway and Rhemes) was full, and that of purpose to darken the sense, that since they must needs translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof it might be kept from being understood." The same author says, "of this translation the learned Mr. Matthew Poole has given the following character. In this royal version, says he, occur a good many specimens of great learning and skill in the original tongues, and of an acumen and judgment more than common. By others it has been censured as too literal, or following the original *Hebrew* and *Greek* too closely and exactly, and leaving too many of the words in the original untranslated, which makes it not so intelligible to a mere *English* reader. This last was perhaps in some measure owing to the king's instructions, the third of which was, that the old ecclesiastical words *should be kept*. However it be, we see many of the words in the original retained, as, *Hosanna, Hallelujah, Amen, Raka, Mammon, Manna, Maranatha, Phylactery*, &c. for which no reason can be given, but that they are left untranslated in the vulgar Latin." This author further declares, that Nary, in his preface to the Bible, (printed in 1719) remarks there were certain words in the scripture, which use and custom had in a manner consecrated, as, *Sabbath, Rabbi, Baptize, Scandalize, Synagogue*, &c. which, he said, he had every where retained, though they were neither *Latin* nor *English*, but *Hebrew* and *Greek*, because they are as well understood, even by men of the meanest capacity, as if they had been

English." Speaking of Wickliff's translation, he adds, "In Dr. Wickliff's translation of the Bible, we may observe that those words of the original which have since been termed sacred words, were not always thus superstitiously regarded: thus for instance, Matt. iii. 6. is rendered *weren waschen*, instead of *were baptized*, though for the most part they are here left untranslated, or are not rendered into English so frequently as they are in the Anglo-Saxonic translation."

From the above instructions given by king James to the translators and the subjoined extracts, the following observations are obvious, and are submitted to the consideration of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

1. It is evident from rule *third* of the king's instructions to the translators, that he forbade them to translate the *old ecclesiastical words:* and in rule *fourth* he commands, that when any word hath divers significations, they should retain that in their translation which has been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of faith.

From the first extract subjoined to the above instructions of the king, it appears that his majesty was careful that his instructions should be observed by the translators, and *especially* the *third* and *fourth* rules. "It was his majesty's pleasure, that besides the learned person employed with them for the Hebrew and Greek, there should be three or four of the most eminent and grave divines of their university assigned by the vice-chancellor upon conference with the rest of the heads to be the overseers of the translations, as well Hebrew as Greek, for the better observation of the rules appointed by his highness, and *especially* concerning the *third* and *fourth* rule." In the second extract the translators, in their preface to the reader, declare that they had observed at least his majesty's *third* rule respecting the old ecclesiastical words. They say, "they had on the one side avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who left the *old ecclesiastical words*, and betook them to others, as when they put *washing* for *baptism*, &c.—In the third extract, though highly commended (and we believe justly) by Mr. Poole, their translation was censured by some others. The grounds of this censure are, that their translation is "too literal or following the original Hebrew and Greek too closely and exactly, and leaving too many of the words in the original untranslated,

which makes it not so intelligible to a mere English reader." —It is said by the author from whom the instructions and extracts were taken, that "t' as perhaps in some measure owing to the king's instructions, the *third* of which was, that the *old ecclesiastical words should be kept.*" He adds, that "however it be, we see many of the words in the original retained, as, *hosanna*, &c. for which no reason can be given but that they are left untranslated in the vulgar Latin." This author also informs us that Nary in his preface to the Bible, printed 1719, says, that "he had every where retained these *consecrated* words, though they were neither Latin nor English, but Hebrew and Greek." And he adds in the last extract, that Dr. Wickliff in his translation, though he has in Matt. iii. 6. rendered the word baptized by washed, yet these words termed *sacred words* are *for the most part* left untranslated by him, or are not so frequently translated into Engliſh as in the Anglo-Saxonic translation.

2. Let it be particularly noticed, that among those words called *consecrated ecclesiastical words*, and which were forbidden by the king to be translated into English, are the words *baptism* and *baptize*. This must be obvious to any person who will compare the king's instructions with the extracts made above. The king in his instructions to the translators, rule third, commands "*the old ecclesiastical words to be kept,*" and gives the word *church* not to be translated *congregation* with an &c. as a specimen of these words. The translators, in their preface quoted above, declare that *they*, in order to avoid being puritanical in their translation, had put *baptism* where the Puritans had put *washing*. They also say that the Puritans by so doing "left the *old ecclesiastical words,*" which clearly demonstrate that the word *baptism* was one of those words reckoned both by the king and the translators to be an *old*, a *consecrated*, and an *ecclesiastical* word. This, the translators add, was one of the Puritan scrupulosities, and that they had in their translation avoided it. This is also proved from what was said by Nary in his preface to the Bible, printed 1719. He declares in the extract made above, that *baptize* was one of the *consecrated words* which he had every where retained in his translation, and which he allows are neither Latin nor English, but Greek. If more evidence of this fact was necessary, we might add, that the author of the work from which the extracts above are made,

declares, that these words called sacred words (of which baptism and baptized are two) were not always thus superstitiously regarded. As evidence of this he remarks that Dr. Wickliff in his translation of Matt. iii. 6. rendered the phrase *were baptized*, by *weren waschen*, though in his translation the old ecclesiastical words are for the most part left untranslated, or are not rendered into English so frequently as they are in the Anglo-Saxonic translation.

3. From the above instructions and extracts it is very evident, that whatever the words *baptism* and *baptize* may signify in the Greek language, they are words which are not translated in our version of the Bible. The king virtually prohibited their being translated, the translators declare they left them untranslated, and others allow that they are neither "*Latin nor English*," but Greek. This surely should rouse the attention of every one who has any regard to the authority of the divine Saviour, to inquire what do these words mean when correctly translated into English. If they signify *sprinkling* or *pouring*, let them be so translated. Had the king and the translators been Baptists and believed that these words signified *immersion* or *dipping*, would it not have been singular that they should agree to conceal their meaning by giving us only the Greek words anglicised? If they did mean sprinkling as is generally asserted, there surely could have been no harm in translating them accordingly, when it was both the duty and interest of those who superintended the translation to do it. Why then all this concealment of their signification? It is said that they were *old*, *ecclesiastical*, and even *consecrated*, words. It is believed, that *consecrated* and *ecclesiastical* as the king and translators esteemed them, had they meant any thing but immersion, these qualities would not have saved them from being rendered into English. But who said these words were consecrated and ecclesiastical words which should not be translated? The king and ecclesiastics whose practice required this *pious fraud* to justify their kind of baptism, or at least to conceal that their practice was unscriptural. In no place of the Bible that I remember does God say that there are certain *old*, *consecrated*, and *ecclesiastical* words which must not be translated into the English language. The translators themselves only thought that these words were *consecrated* and *ecclesiastical*, when they occurred in certain

places, and when used to express the mode of Christan baptism. Thus in the following passages where the same Greek words occur, they disregard their *age*, their *consecration*, and their *ecclesiastical* nature. "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have *dipped* it. And when he had *dipped* the sop he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon." "And he was clothed with a vesture *dipped* in blood, and his name was called the Word of God." John xiii. 26. Rev. xix. 13. See also Matt. xxvi. 23. in the Greek. The translators in these and in other instances have inadvertently, or rather unavoidably, to make sense of these passages, shewn us that they believed the Greek word *baptisma* means *dipping*. It may be presumed that there were particular reasons for leaving these words untranslated where Christian baptism is spoken of, unless we can make ourselves believe that in those days king James and the translators in this acted without any reasons at all. But it is not easily believed that they acted without these reasons, when it is remembered that they had every inducement to translate the words if they meant nothing contrary to their practice. It was with these *old*, *ecclesiastical* words that the *clergy* succeeded in preserving the fashion of priestcraft. When Tindal issued his translation of the Bible, because he had in it disregarded the words which the clergy esteemed *sacred*, they condemned it. He had, for instance, changed *charity* into *love*; *church* into *congregation*; *priest* into *senior*; *grace* into *favour*; *confession* into *knowledge*; *penance* into *repentance*; and *a contrite heart* into *a troubled heart*. Sir Thomas More, who warmly espoused the cause of the clergy against Tindal's translation, wrote a dialogue with a view to bring it into contempt among the people. Tindal, in answer to it (as quoted by the author from whom we have taken our extracts) thus speaks, "What made *them* whose cause Sir Thomas espoused, so uneasy and impatient, was, they had lost their *juggling terms* wherewith they imposed on and misled the people. For instance, the word church he said was by the popish clergy appropriated to themselves, whereas of right it was common to all the whole *congregation* of them that believe in Christ. So he said the school-doctors and preachers were wont to make many divisions, distinctions, and sorts of *grace*; with *confession*, they juggled and made the people, as oft as they

spake of it to understand it by *shrift* in the ear. So by the word *penance* they made the people understand holy deeds of their enjoining, with which they must make satisfaction for their sins to God-ward." The Bible is not yet free from these juggling terms, when words are left untranslated, and another meaning is affixed to them than what they originally signify, and that meaning sanctioned by very extensive practice. Whether this has originated in kingcraft or priestcraft, or in both, justice demands that it should be detected. A sacred regard to the authority of God ought to lead us to reject an error, however old, sanctioned by whatever authority, or however generally practised.

FOR THE WITNESS.

CRITICAL DISQUISITION ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

[Continued from No. V. p. 205.]

Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God;) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which were sometime disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.

It has not escaped the observation of the reflective mind, that difficult passages usually are the first which are put in requisition to support a false system. Universalists betake themselves to the third chapter of Peter's first epistle, with an interest similar to their's who try to support the doctrine of purgatory from the same passage. Slighting the plain parts of the Bible, where wayfaring men do not err, they would from obscure texts persuade the sinful sons and daughters of Adam, that whatever they eat of, they shall sooner or later be as gods, and shall not surely die. They assert, that according to the above declaration of the apostle Peter, when Christ was put to death in the flesh his human soul was still alive; and that by this soul, separated from the body, he descended into hell and preached to the damned spirits during the interval between his death and

resurrection, and so saved all the souls of the people who had been disobedient in the days of Noah. Let us examine the matter.

"*Quickened by the Spirit*," supposes that some part of our Lord was dead, or how could he have been quickened? What was that part? "He was put to death in *the flesh*," saith Peter. Now the Universalists say, that the salvation in question commenced at Christ's death:—but his flesh was not quickened till the time of the resurrection, and consequently nothing is said here concerning the transactions of his human soul while his body was in the grave. As to making his descent to hell follow the resurrection, surely no one would think that less preposterous.

If our Lord's body was raised or quickened by the power of his human soul, how are we to understand the apostle to the Gentiles, who says, he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. i. 4. Was not this the Holy Spirit?

Again, "if the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. viii. 11. This same Spirit is exclusively called a quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. So it is written, "The first man Adam was made a *living soul*, the last Adam a *quickening Spirit*." Agreeable to this contrast, it is not said that Christ was quickened by *Psuche*, a soul such as that of the first man; but by a *Pneuma Zoopoiona*, a Spirit that quickens or makes alive, giving not the mortal life, but the life of immortality and incorruption. It is evident, then, that wherever, and at whatever period this preaching took place, it was not by a human soul, but by the divine Spirit.

But supposing the contrary were true, the conclusion which universalists draw from it, is not to be admitted. If the human soul of our Saviour did preach to the wicked spirits, here is nothing said of the success of his preaching. It does not say that even one out of the millions of souls was delivered from wo. What multitudes Jesus preached to in the days of his flesh! and is it to be inferred that all who heard him were saved? No, the gospel gives a very different account. He preached to multitudes; but we

are told that all went back and walked no more with him, save twelve disciples, one of whom too had a devil. He was not so unsuccessful, it seems, in his disembodied state, when in a few hours millions of converts were loosed from their infernal bondage, and dispatched immediately to the realms of eternal pleasure. Such doctrine as this cannot profit the living, and the dead are out of its reach: it is another gospel, and not the apostolic, the scene of which was the earth, and the proclamation, He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.

But again; is it not strange that this preaching should only have been for the benefit of those who were disobedient in the days of Noah? Was antediluvian wickedness entitled to this privilege more than succeeding turpitude? Or did none go to the place of wo but those in the days of Noah? Millions died in their sins before the flood, and millions between that period and the advent of our Saviour: and were the' mentioned *only*, liberated at this pentecostal season? Were these less hardened or more teachable? or Jesus no longer mighty to save to the uttermost?

Further, it follows that these men in the day of the Lord will not have to be judged as other men; for the apostle says, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Certainly had persons who were then disobedient in the days of Noah their desert according to the deeds done in the body, they must be adjudged to everlasting fire. But if they reached heaven at the period specified, this cannot be. If they believed and obeyed when out of the body, it is clear that they will have to be adjudged to heaven according to the deeds done out of the body.

Many ingenious interpretations have been given. Le Clerc thinks that by *Pneumata en phylake*, are meant *spirits keeping guard*, angels who *phylattousi, keep men;* as we find in Ps. xvi. 11, and hence are called *watchers* in Dan. iv. 13. "The Divinity (says this author) is said to have called the men that lived before the flood to repentance, together with the angels, who admonished Noah to exhort them to a better life. I should render the passage thus:—and being quickened by the Spirit, by which he went with the spirits that watch, and preached to the unbelieving, &c. When

God is about to do any thing among men, he is represented as coming down from heaven with the angels as his guard. For this reason, coming down with the angels to admonish Noah and command him to call men to repentance, he is said *to have gone with the spirits that watch;* and besides, to have done that which Noah did in his name and by his command."

Others have thought that the ark was the *phylake, prison,* and have quoted Gen. vii. 16. "The Lord shut them in;"—that the spirits in prison were Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and his family;—that Noah preached to the disobedient,—by word and by practice. Paul says, in proof of his practical preaching, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house: by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." They assert, that from the regular order of the words in the original, it is found, that the "spirits in prison" did not form the audience addressed in preaching, but all the preachers themselves, who by the influence of the divine Spirit preached to the impenitent and unbelieving in Noah's days. One of this class of expositors thus renders the second clause of the text: *By which,* i. e. by the Holy Spirit, *and the spirits on guard, or in a place of safety, he went and preached to the unbelieving—in the days of Noah.*

It would be tedious to enumerate the various opinions on this particular scripture, if the paper afforded room. For my own part, though the following interpretation of the above clause may seem somewhat forced, even to those who have given most elaborate comments on the passage themselves, yet to me it appears consistent with the general tenor of the epistles of Peter, with the context, and with the original. By which (Holy Spirit) also, he went and preached to the spirits *now* in prison. That is to say, Christ once went by his Spirit (for it is not contended that he went in person) compare 1 Peter i. 11. and by this Spirit in Noah a preacher of righteousness, warned the world of the ungodly who are now in prison; for God knows how to reserve the wicked until the day of judgment to be punished. The ellipsis of the word *now,* is elegantly or familiarly used in similar phraseology; and the apostle Peter represents in other parts of his epistles, the wretched

abode of sinners as a prison, where the fallen angels are confined in chains of darkness, and where wicked men are kept till the day of judgment, to them the day of perdition and of the mist of darkness forever.

Having delineated and inculcated the duties of Christians, principally insisting on patience in tribulation, he encourages them to whom he writes by the example of the Captain of their salvation, ver. 18. "*For* Christ," &c. The quickening power of the Holy Spirit is next stated, by which the Lord our righteousness was preached to those spirits, who, however they might once disobey, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, are now imprisoned, incapable now of vexing the righteous souls of saints. For one hundred and twenty years did God wait on them, while the ark was preparing, and yet *few*, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. An awful similarity in the conduct of men in later days is implied in the following verse; after which, the same consolation and encouragement to the believers, as is exhibited in the preceding part of the epistle, is more fully supported by various reasonings. In the fourteenth verse of the first chapter it is written, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you;"—doubtless the same Spirit which had been despised by the antediluvians, "the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." Under the several dispensations since the fall, the infinite condescension of Jehovah has been marked by figurative indications of the atoning sacrifice. By faith, Noah and his family were saved in the ark, which prefigured him who in the bitterness of his soul once declared, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished;" and with their eyes turned to Calvary to the vesture dipped (*bebammenon*) in blood, the hearts of Christian disciples in our days glow with holy gratitude, while mindful of the *Antitype*, which has not respect to the mere putting away of the filth of the flesh, but to the putting off the old man with his deeds, the answer of a good conscience toward God; that because of the resurrection of Christ from the dead they have a righteousness better than their own. They exult in the conviction that he is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him.

The righteousness which the patriarch preached is the same as justifies those who obey the divine command, "Believe and be baptized." What gospel is preached among the infernals, Universalists have not told us, nor is there a syllable of it in the scriptures. Let men beware of wresting the truths of the Gospel to their own destruction. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

JOSIAH.

(To be continued.)

INTERESTING FRAGMENTS.

THERE never was by any, nor ever can be, any act or duty of true holiness performed, where there was not, in order of nature antecedently, an habit of holiness in the persons by whom they are performed. Many acts and duties, for the substance of them good and approveable, may be performed without it; but no one that hath the proper form and nature of holiness can be so. And the reason is, because every act of true holiness must have something supernatural in it, from an internal, renewed principle of grace: and that which hath not so, be it otherwise what it will, is no act or duty of true holiness. This is fully expressed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." The whole of all that actual obedience, and all those duties of holiness which God requireth of us, is contained in these expressions: "Ye shall walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments to do them." Antecedent hereunto, and as the principle and cause thereof, God gives a new heart and a new spirit: this new heart is a heart with the law of God written in it; and this new spirit is the habitual inclination of that heart unto the life of God, or all duties of obedience. Jer. xxxi. 31—34.

All zealous, devout people in a natural religion are enemies to the gospel. By natural religion I mean that which

is the product of the remnant of God's image in fallen man, a little improved by the light of God's word. All such cannot endure to hear that God's law must be perfectly fulfilled in every tittle of it, or no man can be saved by doing:—that they must all perish forever who have not the righteousness of a man who never sinned, who is also God over all, blessed forever, to shelter and cover them from a holy God's anger, and to render them accepted of him:—that this righteousness is put on by the grace of God, and a man must betake himself to it, and receive it as a naked, blushing sinner:—that no man can do any thing that is good till gospel-grace renew him, and make him first a good man. This they never will receive; but do still think a man may grow good by doing good. Matt. xix. 16. 1 Cor. ii. 14. John v. 40. *Mr. Trail.*

As for me, I find more solid truth in that one scripture, which tells me that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, (Jer. xvii. 9.) than in many volumes of idle anti-scriptural notions, reared on the subtile arguings of men, whose eyes have never been opened to see the plague of their own hearts, and who therefore run out in asserting such an ability and power, and inclination to good in man, as neither scripture, nor the experience of such as have their eyes in the least measure opened, admit of. However, if others will think that there are in them such good inclinations, I will quit my part in them. Woful experience convinces me and obliges me to acknowledge to my own shame, that I never looked toward's the Lord's way, save when he drew me. "I was a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." I never went longer in it than the force lasted; I inclined to sit down, and sat indeed down at every step; no great sign I had any heart to the way! I never got up again, but when the Lord's power was of new put forth. I all this while never went one step but with a grudge; I frequently looked back to Sodom; I have been a backsliding heifer; I was grieved for what I left behind; my heart clove to what my light had the greatest opposition to. Thus I was of them that rebel against the light. I often refused where the command was plainest. When I was brought into a strait, I betook myself rather to any shift than Christ. Sin bit me, and

yet I loved it: my heart deceived me often, and yet I trusted in it rather than in God. God dealt with me, in a way of kindness; but when he spake to me in my prosperity, I would not hear: he smote me, and I went on frowardly: I never parted with any sin till God beat me and drove me from it, and hedged in my way. Surely this looks like the heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Gen. vi. 5. Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12. Prov. xxviii. 26. John v. 40. *Mr. Halyburton.*

THE HALF WAS NOT TOLD ME.

So said the queen of Sheba, when she became acquainted with the wisdom of Solomon. So says the soul, who becomes savingly acquainted with the excellency of Christ. "And behold a greater than Solomon is here!" Thus the true saint continues to say, while he enjoys the comfort of walking with God. So he will say again, when he comes to appear with Christ in glory. And thus he may express the rapture of his soul to all eternity. And may we not suppose that this will also be the cry of the sinner, when he comes to feel the wrath of the despised Lamb of God? And will not the *song* of the saint be the *cry* of the sinner forever and ever? While one is forever soaring in realms of felicity, and the other forever sinking in the regions of despair, will not this be their perpetual language, "The half was not told me! the half was not told me!" But how different their feelings! How distant the extremes! How broad the separating gulph!

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

In a letter from Mr. M'Pherson at Baltimore, to a friend in Boston, we have a pleasing account of the baptism of two hundred members of one independent church in Edinburgh, Scotland; and that the Lord is daily adding to them such as are saved.

BIBLE SOCIETY.

WITH peculiar pleasure we notice an address to the public on the subject of a Bible society. Although we highly approve of missionary associations, still it is our opinion that a well-regulated Bible society takes the precedence of all others in point of usefulness. With the word of God in their hands, and a disposition to search it, those who are providentially destitute of preaching are better furnished with the means of obtaining religious knowledge, than many who have stated preaching, but substitute it for a personal acquaintance with the scriptures. Besides, it is not in human nature to divest itself entirely of religious prejudices. The best of men *may preach themselves*, being attached to some peculiar creed; but the Bible exhibits a crucified Saviour to all who believe, without respect to nation, parentage or sect. Those who are disposed to patronize the proposed institution, are respectfully invited by this address, to meet at the State House in Boston, on the 6th day of July next, at 3 o'clock, P. M. in order to adopt such measures as may be deemed essential to this important object.

REVIEW OF A NEW TESTAMENT;

In an improved Version, upon the Basis of Archbishop Newcome's new Translation; with a Corrected Text, and Notes Critical and Explanatory. 8vo. William Wells, Boston. 1809.

WHEN men of corrupt principles unite to palm their errors on the world, they generally assume some specious appellation, that the poison may have effect before it is discovered. In the present case, where Christ is to be degraded, and his blood made of no more value than the blood of Abel, the holy work is to be accomplished by 'A Society for PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE!' This Society, who have given us *another Bible*, from which the edition under review was copied, was instituted in England in 1791. The principal object of their association, we are informed, was to oppose the doctrines usually denominated orthodox. They, as well as their brethren on this side of the Atlantic, especially in the capital of New-

England (at whose instance, possibly, the American edition was produced) have perceived the difficulty of completely attaining their grand object, so long as the present translation of the scriptures is generally received. We do not fully know the success of these efforts in England; but among our own countrymen, we much regret that any have been duped, and still more, that some have been perverted. We have reason to believe that the want of greater success among the people here, (many of whom are too much disposed to listen to new doctrines) our version venders must see is partly owing to a circumstance which cannot but be mortifying to their party. For while in England the Socinian preachers are *itinerating* through the kingdom and *viva voce* persuading men every where, that it is *idolatry* to worship Immanuel, here, a competent salary, and, an incapacity (arising, as we charitably hope, merely from the pernicious habit of *reading* sermons) to address the populace in that *manner* which is always best calculated to insure attention, has kept them hitherto in the back ground. But, to supply this provoking deficiency, new psalm-books are published, and old ones revised.* These, being more *portable* than their compilers, and their contents sometimes more pleasing to the ear, are doubtless intended to make deep impressions on the mind, which is always most susceptible when it is most pleased. In addition to these higher improvements, our gentlemen divines, though utterly opposed to the privations and fatigues of the primitive reformers, have exercised their imaginations very extensively, and exhibited much literary talent in various periodical works of the same benevolent tendency. Such *disinterestedness* in gentlemen of the first literary fame, who have voluntarily stepped forward to assist the weak and ignorant in reducing the idol of their blind homage to his, or rather to their proper level, certainly entitles them to the appro-

* The public were not generally apprised of the *new* apparent design and tendency of the hymn-book published some years ago by Dr. Belknap. We do not recollect to have seen this work reviewed. But we think, without injustice to the Compiler, who is now no more, it may be considered an exceptionable publication. Surely, if Paul would not give place, no not for an hour, to *mistaken* teachers, the ministers of Jesus in the present day are censurable for varying and altering hymns to suit the perverted consciences of those who cannot sing the praises of the Redeemer! This *accommodating* sentiment is *more* than implied in the preface of that book.

bation and thanks of that *prince*, who, rather than acknowledge the Eternal Word, preferred the pit of darkness to that place where this hated sovereign must receive, from every inhabitant of heaven, the most exalted ascriptions of "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, forever and ever." Weak Christians, like Thomas, who inconsiderately exclaimed, "My LORD and my GOD; or like Peter, whose imagination had just been heated by a vision, confidently affirmed to Cornelius and his friends, that Jesus was LORD of ALL; that he was JUDGE of quick and dead; that "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him should receive remission of sins;" weak Christians, and indeed all those who have been credulous enough to believe the scriptures without Socinian *helps*, are now (for better late than never) furnished with a *new gospel*, and a *new Bible*.

For a short account of this book, which was professedly intended to revolutionize the Christian system, we refer our readers to the following review of the same translation which first appeared in England, taken from the Evangelical Magazine for Sept. 1808.

"The introduction to this version gives its history, in narrating the means and method pursued to its completion, by the ministers in that connexion, to whom it was committed. The work includes all the books in the common version; but divided into two classes, the *genuine* and the *doubtful*; the latter including the Epistle to the Hebrews—James—2d of Peter—2d and 3d of John—Jude—and the Book of Revelation; which are to be considered as the *apocrypha* of the New Testament; and may be 'publickly read in Christian assemblies, for the edification of the people; but not be alleged as affording alone *sufficient proof* of any doctrine.' Nor is this all:—even in the Books admitted as canonical, several chapters, and parts of chapters, are printed in Italic, (in the English edition) as, at best, extremely doubtful. Of this class we have noticed Matt. i. 17. to the end of chap. ii.—Luke i. 5. to the end of chap. ii.—John viii. 1—12,—beside many verses, or parts of verses.—We submit it, therefore, to the better judgment of the Society, whether, in the next edition, the apocryphal books and passages might not better be wholly omitted; as it would save great part of the expense of printing, and much improve the portability of the book.

That our readers may form some judgment of the work, we shall select a few of the most striking improvements in the new version, contrasted with the common one, in opposite columns, for the reader's convenience in comparing them.

IMPROVED VERSION.	COMMON VERSION.
John i. 1—3.	
'The word was in the beginning; and the word was with God; and the word was a [illegible] things were DONE by him, &c.	"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.—All things were MADE by him," &c.
Matt. xiv. 33.	
——'More tolerable—in a day of judgment.'	——"More tolerable—in THE day of judgment than for thee."
Matt. xi. 23, 24.	
'Thou art A Son of God.'	——"Thou art THE Son of God."
Rom. ix. 5.	
——'Of whom, by natural descent, Christ came. God, who is over all, BE blessed forever.'	——"Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever."
1 *Tim.* iii. 16.	
'And without controversy, the mystery of godliness is great. He WHO was manifested in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit, seen by MESSENGERS, preached to the Gentiles,' &c.	"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; GOD was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of ANGELS, preached unto the Gentiles, &c."
Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7.	
'For let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus also; who, being in the form of God, did not EAGERLY GRASP at the resemblance to God; but DIVESTED himself *of it*, and took *on him* the form of a servant,' &c.	"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, THOUGHT IT NOT ROBBERY to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant," &c.

The notes are critical and short, but numerous; their evident design is to purge the New Testament most effectually of evangelical doctrines. Sometimes the text is changed upon the authority of some various reading;—often a new sense is given to the old text by the legerdemain of criticism; and when both of these fail, an expository note is inserted, to inform us the writer meant very differently

from what he has been generally supposed to mean. We shall give a few instances :—

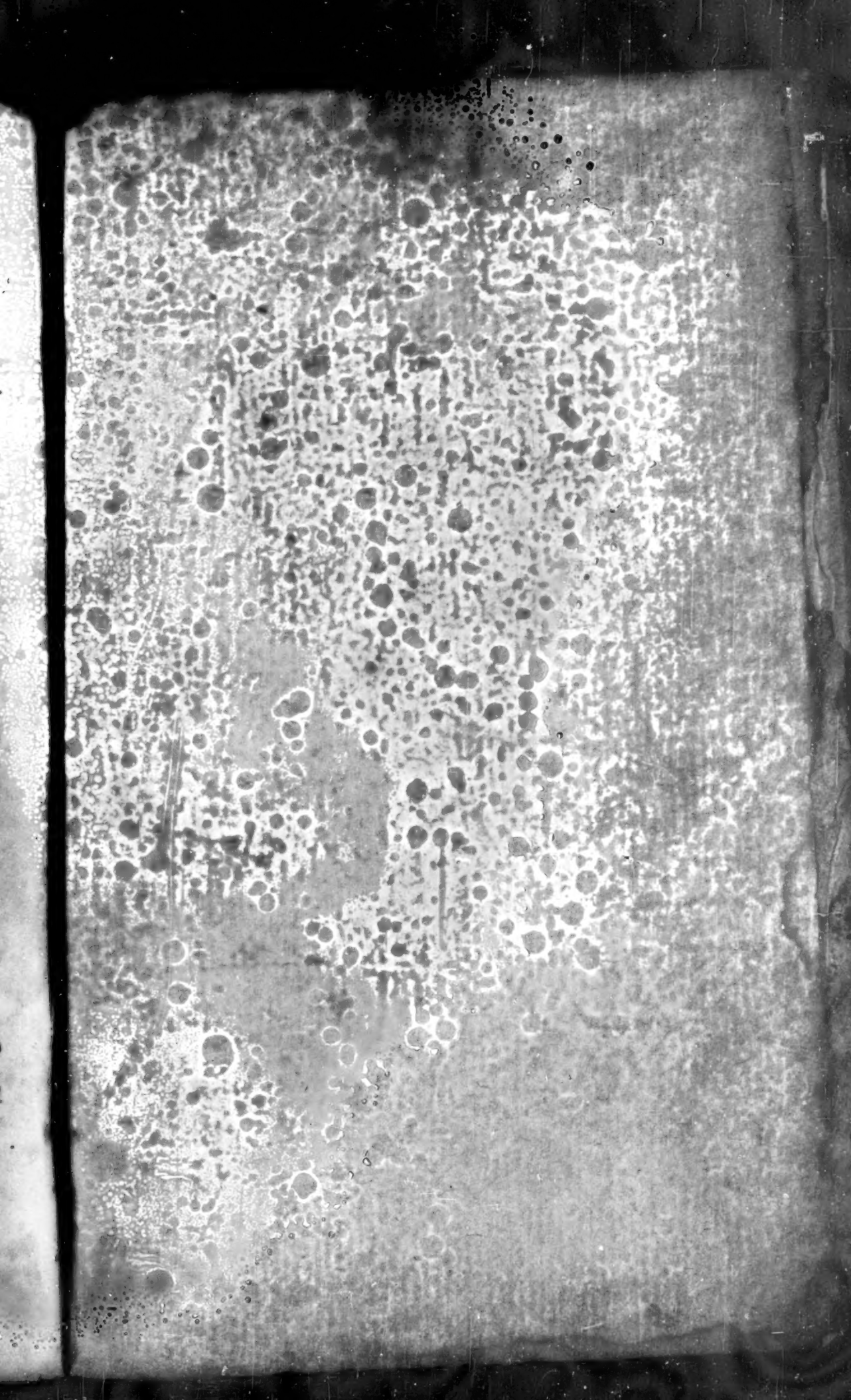
Matt. iv. 1. 'Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted of the devil.' Now, we are told, 'this form of expression denotes, that the historian is about to describe a *visionary* scene ;' and then we are referred to the visionary hypothesis of Mr. Farmer.—As to the *devil*, we are informed (on John viii. 44.) that he is only 'the principle of moral evil personified ;' and his introduction here, 'no more proves the real existence of such a being, than the introduction of the lamb, or the red dragon, in the apocalyptic vision, is a proof of the real existence of those symbolical figures.'

Matt. xxv. 46. 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment.' The note says, 'The word rendered *punishment*, signifies *correction* inflicted, for the benefit of the offender. And the word translated *everlasting*, is often used to express a *long* but indefinite duration.' So in the very sentence of damnation is found the comfortable doctrine of universal restoration !

Now, whatever the *Christian* reader may think of this work, there can be but one opinion among the ungodly and profane, namely, that he has accomplished no mean achievement, who has got rid of the devil,—the day of judgment, —and everlasting punishment ! ! !"

Insidious aim ! to wrest the word of God,
And spoil its Author of his honours due !
Remember Uzzah ! the vindictive rod
May smite officiousness though e'er so *new*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Review of Mr Holmes's Fast sermon came too late for this month. Several valuable communications are necessarily deferred.

Our new correspondent, Aristarchus, will accept our thanks for his letter on a most important subject.